

Despair in haor

No Nababarsha celebration after crop loss due to flash flood; a shocked farmer dies of 'heart attack'

STAR REPORT

A woman farmer has died of heart attack she had apparently failing to bear the news that flash flood washed away most of her crops in Habiganj's Baniachong upazila.

Mosammat Tarabanu, 45, suffered the cardiac arrest on Thursday while weeping in her home in Najarpur village, said Sahid Mia, a local union parishad member.

Wife of a physically challenged man, Tarabanu, who had a son and two daughters, had cultivated Boro crops on 2.5 acres of land after taking a loan from a non-government organisation.

However, she, on Thursday, found out that flash floods inundated most of her crops in that haor area, Abdul Hamid, one of her neighbours, said, adding the woman could not bear the shock and passed away.

Early flash floods, triggered by incessant rain and onrush of water from the river upstream, have flooded vast areas of farmland in the country's

northeastern region. Usually such flash floods strike the areas in April but this year they came quite early, leaving the farmers with no chance to harvest their crops.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon's (BPA) Habiganj chapter, told our Moulvibazar correspondent: "I visited most of the haor areas in Habiganj. The floods have devastated the farmers..."

"The death of Tarabanu is extremely tragic."

Meanwhile, BPA's Habiganj and Khowai River Water-keeper, a platform working for the protection of the river, formed a human chain on Friday, demanding compensation to the farmers in Sylhet for the crop loss and protesting "negligence" of Water Development Board in building embankments in time.

Speakers at the programme organised in the district's Sirishtola area also demanded that the government declares Habiganj as a "distressed area".



Cows swim across a flooded haor area in South Sunamganj recently looking for dry ground. Flash floods, triggered by rains and onrush of water from upstream, have flooded vast areas of farmland and grazing grounds in the district. Losing the only crop of the year, farmers are selling their cattle and valuables and migrating to urban areas to survive.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASTIR

'New weapons' spike tension

FROM PAGE 1

The nuclear-armed North is under United Nations sanctions over its weapons programmes, and has ambitions to build a rocket capable of delivering a warhead to the US mainland — something Trump has vowed "won't happen".

ing battle group to the Korean peninsula Trump told the Fox Business Network: "We are sending an armada."

"He is doing the wrong thing," he added of Kim. "He's making a big mistake."

China, the North's sole major ally, and Russia have both urged restraint, with Beijing's Foreign Minister Wang Yi warning Friday that "conflict could break out at any moment".

In a call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov later Friday, Wang Yi said the common goal of the two nations was to "bring all the parties back to the negotiating table", according to a statement on China's Foreign Ministry website.

"China is ready to coordinate closely with Russia to help cool down as quickly as possible the situation on the peninsula and encourage the parties concerned to resume dialogue," Wang told Lavrov, referring to the stalled six-party talks on the North's nuclear programme that includes Russia, China and the United States.

"Preventing war and chaos on the peninsula meets common interests," he added.

With the show of strength, Pyongyang is aiming its message at China as well as the US, analysts say.

Beijing's priority remains preventing any instability on its doorstep, and it has been unnerved by the sabre-rattling.

But diplomats in Pyongyang point out that the North raises its rhetoric every spring, when Washington and Seoul hold annual joint military exercises that it views as preparations for invasion.

It has not previously held a nuclear test in the month of April.

Military specialists keep a close eye on Pyongyang's parades for clues about developments in its capabilities.

The hardware displayed yesterday included what appeared to be new

ICBMs or prototypes, and the Pukkuksong submarine-launched ballistic missile, which Pyongyang successfully test-fired last August, reports and analysts said.

The rockets carried on articulated trailers appeared to be longer than the North's existing KN-08 or KN-14 missiles, analysts said.

Chad O'Carroll, managing director of specialist service NK News, told AFP they could be a liquid-fuelled intercontinental ballistic missile, or an early version of one, even though Pyongyang has yet to formally announce it has an operational ICBM.

"It will be a big game-changer once it is deployed in service but they have got a long testing schedule ahead," he said.

"We'll probably see more engine tests or component tests building up eventually to an actual test of the full unit."

Pyongyang could use the parade as a show of strength in preference to a nuclear test, analysts said.

It wanted to send "a tough message to the United States in response to the Trump administration's recent rhetoric and the military steps the United States has taken", said Evans Revere of the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Another missile launch or nuclear test "can't be ruled out", he said, but the recent US cruise missile strike on Syria and Washington's tough stance "may give Pyongyang some pause".

"A parade is a highly visible but non-kinetic way of showing off capabilities," he told AFP.

Kim did not address the rally himself yesterday, instead waving and smiling as ecstatic crowds of flag- and flower-bearing civilians — men in suits, women in traditional hanbok dresses — filed past him behind the military display.

"Long live!" they chanted, some in tears.

FROM PAGE 16

discussion between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi in the presence of Mamata on April 8 during Hasina's recent visit to India. However, the West Bengal Chief Minister reiterated her opposition to the proposed treaty.

But Modi assured Hasina that his government can and will find a solution to the issue.

The Modi government has decided to send this month a team of hydrologists to West Bengal's next door neighbour Sikkim, where Teesta originates, to survey eight dams built upstream of Teesta to ascertain availability of water in the lean season.

The team is being sent in the wake of Mamata's complaint that the West

Bengal part of Teesta is not getting adequate water due to withdrawal of water in Sikkim and so there is not much water in the river to be shared with downstream Bangladesh.

Bharti said BJP is now eyeing power in West Bengal. "Earlier we used to win hardly any seat in the states like Assam and Haryana. But now, we have formed governments in these states. We are confident about forming government in West Bengal too in future with a clear majority," she said.

Criticising the law and order situation in West Bengal, Bharti alleged "a reign of terror has been unleashed in Bengal and our party workers are being targeted. I have asked them to fight against these odds as the time is now ripe to fight for a change in power."

Ostensibly yesterday's event was to mark the 105th anniversary of Kim Il-Sung's birth — a date known as the "Day of the Sun" in the North — and a squadron of warplanes flew overhead forming the number.

But it was also intended to send an unmistakable message to Washington about the isolated country's military might.

Kim's close aide Choe Ryong-Hae declared that the North was a "powerful nuclear-armed state in the Orient and Asia's leader in rocketry".

It could "beat down enemies with the power of nuclear justice", he said, and was "prepared to respond to an all-out war with an all-out war."

"We are ready to hit back with nuclear attacks of our own style against any nuclear attacks," he said.

The 1950-53 Korean War ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty and Pyongyang says it needs nuclear weapons to defend itself against a possible US invasion.

It has carried out five nuclear tests — two of them last year — and multiple missile launches, one of which saw several rockets come down in waters provocatively close to Japan last month.

Speculation that it could conduct a sixth blast in the coming days to coincide with the anniversary has reached fever pitch, with specialist US website 38North describing its Punggye-ri test site as "primed and ready" and White House officials saying military options were "already being assessed".

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Politics unwanted

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North Korean soldiers march during a military parade marking the 105th birth anniversary of country's founding father Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang yesterday. Inset, North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, centre, inspecting the parade at an undisclosed location.

Celebration in restriction

FROM PAGE 1

prime locations in the capital where large cultural programmes are held for welcoming the New Year — watered down people's festive mood and enthusiasm, visitors alleged.

Many carrying umbrellas, water bottles and bags and purses were prevented from entering the two places, they alleged.

When people learnt about the security hassles at the two places in the morning from the ones already there, many felt discouraged to go there, The Daily Star correspondent learnt.

"People's enthusiasm and their festive mood centring the Pahela Baishakh had been spoiled much due to excessive restrictions of law enforcement agencies," said Shyamoli Rahman of Azimpur.

With her son and daughter, Shyamoli was not allowed to enter Dhaka University campus at Nilkhet as she refused to leave her bag, containing her purse, phone and her children's essentials, and two umbrellas behind.

"Instead of Dhaka University, I will take my children to other places to celebrate Pahela Baishakh," Shyamoli told The Daily Star correspondent at Nilkhet on Friday.

Shipon Ahmed, who came from Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital to join the Mongol Shovajatra in front of the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University, said excessive security measures have eventually shrunken the Pahela Baishakh celebrations.

Law enforcers prevented people from entering the DU, Ramna and Suhrawardy Udyan areas after 4:00pm, alleged many visitors.

As the clock struck five, law enforcers started getting people out of those areas. They blew whistles creating a sense of panic and insecurity.

Charon Sangskritik Kendra and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front protested this move of law enforcers. The two organisations formed a human chain and held rallies in front of Raju Sculpture at TSC intersection on Friday afternoon for imposing time restrictions on celebrating Pahela Baishakh.

Leaders of the organisations said the government had limited the celebrations after "compromising with Hefajat-e Islam". They claimed that such "compromising attitude of the government has allowed fundamentalist forces to attack Bangalee culture".

The DU, Ramna and Suhrawardy Udyan areas were found largely deserted during a visit late Friday afternoon. Streets were almost devoid of people in the evening.

These places are usually crowded during Pahela Baishakh celebrations.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Syed Abul Bark Alvi, chairman of Printing

department of Fine Arts Institute, Dhaka University, said law enforcement agencies' excessive security measures had affected people's enthusiasm and the festivities on DU campus.

He, however, said the undesired pushing and shoving among participants of the Mongol Shovajatra was avoided due to law enforcement agencies security measures. "Besides, police also put restrictions on roadside shops in Dhaka University, Ramna and Suhrawardy Udyan areas which had obstructed people in previous years."

Due to time restrictions and security checks, people were seen thronging alternative places, including Rabintra Sarobar in Dhanmondi.

Many young children with their guardians went to a Baishakhi fair on Uttara Sector-3 playground around 4:00pm. As a musical troupe was about to play a number around five in the afternoon, law enforcers started blowing whistles and closed all gates.

Initially, they even prevented visitors from getting out.

A visitor said the children accompanying him got panicked because of this.

After several minutes, law enforcers allowed people to exit the venue and declared the fair closed and the musical event concluded.

In different parts of the country, socio-cultural organisations and educational institutions organised various programmes to mark Pahela Baishakh but had to go through the hoops of the security measures.

Students of the Institute of Fine Arts of DU brought out Mongol Shovajatra (procession of good wishes) around 9:00am with thousands of people taking part.

This year, Chhayanaut, a leading cultural organisation of the country, celebrated Pahela Baishakh for the 50th year. Its programme at Ramna Batumul in Ramna Park, considered the highlight of Pahela Baishakh celebrations by many, was held under strict security measures.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other leaders sang along to the tunes of Rabintra Sangeet at a programme at the lawn of Gono Bhaban. Hasina singing was caught on camera and shared on social media by State Minister for Post and Telecommunications Tarana Halim.

As Rabintra's song Anadoloke, mongol aloke, birajo, sotto sundaro was being played, the prime minister was seen swaying and singing to the tune standing beside Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury.

To celebrate the festival, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia attended a cultural programme in front of BNP's Naya Paltan central office.

CID takes over Raudha's case

Immigration put on alert so the accused can't flee country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Criminal Investigation Department yesterday took over the charge of investigation into the murder case filed over the death of Maldivian medical student and model Raudha Athif.

Asmaul Hoque of CID in Rajshahi, assigned to investigate the case, collected documents from the previous investigating official of Shah Makhdum Police Station.

Meanwhile, Inspector Anwar Ali Tuhin of Shah Makhdum police said they had informed the immigration authorities about the accused person so that she could not leave the country without police permission.

Police also sent Raudha's phone and laptop to the IT Forensic Laboratory of the CID to examine them and submit a report on its contents.

Raudha, 21, a second-year student of Islami Bank Medical College in Rajshahi, was found dead in her dormitory room on March 29.

On the same day, Rajshahi police filed an unnatural death case with Shah Makhdum Police Station.

CID Inspector Asmaul received a report from Inspector Rashidul Islam of the Detective Branch of police who had first investigated the unnatural death case.

Rashidul's investigation has not been completed, and his report refers to the police inquest and autopsy reports, according to which Raudha "committed suicide", Asmaul told reporters.

But Raudha's father Mohamed Athif rejected the reports and filed a murder case with a Rajshahi court against one of her classmates on April 10.

He left Rajshahi on Friday for the Maldives and is likely to return within 10 days, said his lawyer Kamrul Manir.

Depression in the Bay

BSS, Dhaka

A depression southeast of the Bay of Bengal and adjoining areas has moved north-northeastwards, intensifying into a deep depression over the east-central part of the Bay and adjoining southeastern area (near latitude 14.10 N and longitude 89.90 E).

The centre of the deep depression was about 925 kilometres (km) south-southwest of the Chittagong port, 850km south-southwest of the Cox's Bazar port, 930km south of the Mongla port and 880km south of the Payra port at 6:00pm yesterday, said a meteorological office press release.

It is likely to intensify further and move in a north-northeasterly direction further.

The maximum sustained wind speed within 48km of the deep depression's centre is about 50 kilometres per hour (kph), rising to 60kph in gusts or squalls. The sea will remain rough near the deep depression centre, it added.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to keep hoisted distant cautionary signal no one.

All fishing boats and trawlers over the north of the Bay have been advised not to venture into deep sea.

Bangladeshis on Forbes list

FROM PAGE 1

Digital School and College on her ancestral land in Mymensingh, with the goal of providing education for the rural poor through digital tools, read her bio published on Forbes website.

"The school charges a minimal tuition while offering free textbooks, school uniforms and transport," it said,

adding that she helped 600 children so far, received the Commonwealth Youth Award for Asia in 2016.

She also developed a low-cost solar irrigation system for which she was awarded the Green Talent award in 2015, it added.

Mizanur, on the other hand, founded Physically-Challenged

Development Foundation (PDF) in 2008 with the aim of helping young people with disabilities, according to Forbes.

The non-profit organisation provides young people with disabilities with work skill trainings and raise awareness on disability issues, it added.